way of deprecating unjust and ill-mannered attacks on Sir Robert Smirke, we would not, we cannot have it supposed that we are indifferent to the character of the architecture of the great national work with which he is intrusted. It is an occasion for which young men may languish, nor should the oldest be indifferent as to the display of his talent. Sir Robert Smirke may detect in all this anxiety evinced through the press, a not uncomplimentary feeling towards himself, for the more perfect the work, the greater will be his own fame.

We shall indeed be truly sorry if, as our correspondent states, some house-row façade is to be set up, when so fair an occasion offered, without the risk of any marked dissonance of character, to give us a palatial front. A noble central vestibule, with screen, colonnades, and appropriate extreme wings, might be rendered for the nation's satisfaction, after such an immense cost for the storehouse part, as we may term it, of the Museum. Surely, Sir Robert Smirke will not be above all remonstrance. We protest for ourselves to be painfully sensitive on the subject of a good man's fame, and what we have said hitherto has been in confidence that as there had been no haste in the former progress of the works, so there would be least now in rushing to a conclusion, without the decency of some slight heed of the public voice. It really cannot be borne, and we respectfully warn Sir Robert against it, that he should not be absolutely heedless of the public anxiety. They have spoken out in time, which makes his responsibility the greater. God forbid that he should live to hear reproaches which he shall have himself earned and provoked.

There is one chance of remedy yet, and we think we are justified in resorting to it if Sir Robert Smirke does not shew some such becoming amount of deference to public feeling and the public right, as to satisfy it that his work is not vastly inferior to what it might by other means and from other hands obtain. We are willing to open our pages to designs, and thus to place on record that which may be judged of when Sir Robert's heedless perpetration should unfortunately stand out, and by this test let him be *judged*, and if he deserve it, let him be condemned.

Surely, it is not too much that he should tell the public what finish he is about to give to this TACET OF HIS LIFE. He has had the public confidence in as large a degree as any man: let him not abuse it. We conjure him as a friend painfully anxious in his behalf, we conjure him not to abuse the public confidence. He will repent it bitterly if he does.

HEIGHTS OF THE SURREY AND MIDDLESEX HILLS.

SIR,—Will any of your numerous readers favour me with the height of the Surrey and Middlesex Hills above low-water mark of the river Thames, viz. Herne Hill, Denmark Hill, Blackheath, Forest Hill, Brixton Hill, on the Surrey side, and Islington, Hampstead, Primrose Hill, Maida Hill, and Highgate, on the Middlesex side? And they will oblige your constant reader and subscriber,

W. X.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

SIR,—Considerable interest is at present excited in regard to the contemplated improvements in Westminster Abbey—improvements which, although they have been long talked of, are, nevertheless, most unaccountably postponed.

What the exact nature of the proposed alterations may be it seems difficult to ascertain; one paper asserts that it is intended to erect a central spire; another, that a design for a lantern tower has been approved; whilst both declare that the exterior of the sacred edifice is about to undergo a complete restoration.

On the other hand, we hear that the repairs about to be undertaken will be confined for the present to the interior of the building, in order to provide additional accommodation, as expeditiously as possible, for the immense multitude which on every Sunday are to be seen endeavouring to obtain admittance into the abbey church, and that this will be effected by the removal of the present unsightly screen-work, and by throwing open the aisles,—some say, one of the transepts in addition; others, both. Again, we learn that all the pews are to be abolished, and that a splendid window of foreign stained glass is in course of preparation for the south transept, and (what would indeed be a cause for national rejoicing) that all fees are to be done away with, and public at large, as is the invariable custom in all the great continental cities.

It is likewise currently reported, and we believe with some foundation, that the Pagan monuments which now disfigure and disgrace the hallowed walls of this truly glorious pile, are to be shortly removed to the adjoining chapter house, which is to be fitted up for their reception in a manner that will reflect both credit and honour upon the age.

Considering, therefore, the important position which THE BUILDER is already beginning to occupy in public estimation, I have deemed it but proper to address myself to you, in the first instance, for correct information in respect to the proposed improvements in Westminster Abbey, the subject not being merely one of professional, but of national importance; and I have done so in the firm belief that THE BUILDER will hereafter be found to exercise a powerful and beneficial influence over the ecclesiastical architecture of this country, and to materially assist in rescuing from neglect and desecration the sacred and venerable churches of the land, which, from the want of proper and judicious repairs, are fast falling into ruin and decay.

The condition of our metropolitan cathedrals, as likewise of the generality of our London parish churches, is indeed such as to call for the interposition of your able advocacy; and I feel myself justified in asserting that a very general desire is entertained by a most numerous and influential body of your subscribers, that you should devote some portion of your valuable publication to the consideration of the present low state of ecclesiastical architecture in this capital, as is most painfully exemplified in the case of only too many of the modern churches and chapels erected within the diocese of the metropolitan bishop.

I have the honour to subscribe myself your very obedient servant,

PICTAS.

NEW STANNARIES HALL, TOWN HALL, AND MARKETS, TRURO.

SIR,—In communicating to you that Messrs. Cope and Eales are the successful competitors in the Truro market designs, and the second premium has been awarded to Mr. Emslie, I shall, I suppose, be telling no news; but I wish to add, those gentlemen were at Truro, and managed to explain their designs to some of the corporation, and that this circumstance occasioned some of the delay in the decision—in doing which I believe myself to be forwarding one of the aims of your opportune magazine.

Yours,

A YOUNG CHIP.

Our correspondent seems to hint at something which he would disapprove of, by mentioning the presence of Messrs. Cope and Eales at the scene of competition, and certainly from the way in which some competitions have been managed by what is called earwigging and influence, it is a conclusion to which many persons may readily jump, that intercourse between competitors and committees, or members of committees, is unfair and should be prohibited. So it is with many of the evils of life: such and such a thing is an objection, or appears to be, therefore,—do away with it. Now, this is a sort of reasoning that in nine cases out of ten is the very reverse of a logical and correct one. Some evils, or apprehended evils, are cured by increase. What we want is not a check on the intercourse of competitors and committees, but the acknowledged and free exercise of it. Many members of committees, and committees also, have been ridiculously chary on the subject of giving information, as though it were better to let an architect find out that which is already known to themselves. Committees should be open courts to every competitor, and the most intelligent member of a committee should be chairman, and accessible under proper regulations to every competitor. What is wanted in these cases? Why the best that the experience, knowledge, and talent of all parties can produce. An architect may put a question so as to elicit an important answer, and thus be enabled to embody an advantageous feature in his designs, that silence or prohibited intercourse would have foiled. The decisions too should be regulated by more of openness and candour of dealing. It is all a farce to pretend to secrecy and adopt mottoes as is usually done. We want duly qualified judges and an open court of inquiry, and until we get this, competitions will be as they have been, in nine cases out of ten unsatisfactory.

The Right Hon. Lord Lovat is at present building houses for the accommodation of the poor in [illegible]

Tenders.

SIR,—I beg to forward to you the amounts of several tenders for building two houses in Richmond-street, St. James's, which were delivered last Friday, the 20th inst.—S. T. Bull, Esq., 16, Holles-street, Cavendish-square, architect.

Wyatt	£1,290
Pearse and Guerrier	1,547
Payne and Co.	1,640
I'Anson	1,657
Newton and Kelk	1,698

The above tenders were not opened in the presence of the builders, but in an adjoining room, a system upon which you have lately so justly animadverted, and which, I trust, will be the means of altering the present disagreeable system.

Remaining, Sir, yours very obediently,

October 24, 1843. O——.

NOTICES OF CONTRACTS.

BRITISH OAK TIMBER, &c.—14,000 loads of balk, 5,000 loads of plank, 400,000 British Oak Treenails.—Secretary of the Admiralty, Somerset House. Dec. 19.

BANFF, SCOTLAND.—Masons, carpenters, plasterers, slaters, and plumber's work; Hotel and Offices.—Edward Mortimer, Esq., solicitor, Banff. Oct. 31.

BALLASTING.—Bricklayers' Arms, Railway.—Engineer's Office, 11, West Terrace, Upper Grange Road, Bermondsey. Nov. 1.

Adding to and altering St. Andrew's Church, Upton-cum-Chalvey, Bucks.—Ed. Davis, Esq., architect, Sussex-place, Slough; William Beauchamp, Esq., churchwarden, Slough. Nov. 1, 1843.

TENDERS for erecting a Workhouse for the Sevenoaks Union.—Mr. Carnell, Clerk to the Guardians, Sevenoaks. November 1.

COMPETITIONS.

District Surveyor for the metropolitan parishes of St. George-the-Martyr, and St. Andrew, Holborn-above-the-Bars, and the Liberty of the Rolls.—Testimonials to be sent in up to 30th December. Election next January Sessions.—C. H. Ellis, Clerk of the Peace.

Design for a testimonial to the late G. Clending, Esq., to be executed at Westport, at a price of 800 guineas.—Dr. Dillon, Infirmary, Castlebar, Mayo, 20 guineas, Jan. 1, 1844.

Premium of a gold medal or money for the best mode of cleansing streets.—March 1, 1844. J. N. G. Gutch, 20, Vere-street.

TO OUR CORRESPONDENTS.

"Nemo."—*We are assured that Mr. Woolf first introduced the mathematical pencils. He should beware how he imputes motives. Perhaps Mr. Elliott can corroborate this if he inquires.*

"A Young Surveyor."—*There is no alteration in the revised Building Act respecting the age of district surveyors or deputies.*

ADVERTISEMENTS.

R. E. CLARKE and SON, PAPER-STAINERS, 2, Chenies-street, Bedford-square, respectfully beg leave to state that they have now on hand a large quantity of PAPER-HANGINGS, which they can offer at a very great reduction of price.

Several Hundred Remnant Lots of from three pieces to five pieces will be sold at one-half the usual price.

E. WOLFF & SON'S

NEWLY-INVENTED

MATHEMATICAL PENCILS,

FOR

MATHEMATICIANS, ENGINEERS, ARCHITECTS, &c.

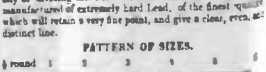
Manufactured of Extra Hard Lead, and Warranted to retain a very Fine Point.

E. WOLFF & SON, in introducing their Extra Hard Lead Pencils for Mathematical and Architectural purposes, beg to draw attention to the advantages resulting from their adoption in preference to the ordinary Pencils. They are made of six distinct sizes, by which means they can be fitted to all instruments, and are so constructed that each Pencil may be cut in halves without waste, thus making two Pencils, and of a length the most convenient for use, and obviating the difficulties existing with respect to the ordinary pencil.

E. Wolff & Son have also half-round Pencils suitable for the Spring Bow Instrument, thus preventing the necessity of dividing the Pencil down the centre. They are also manufactured of extremely hard Lead, of the finest quality, which will retain a very fine point, and give a clear, even, and distinct line.

PATTERN OF SIZES.

Round	1	2	3	4	5	6
Half-round	1	2	3	4	5	6



*** May be had of most respectable Stationers, and of the Manufacturers, 8, Church-street, Soho Fields, London.

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